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Latin America Report

MEXICO: CHIHUAHUA ARCHBISHOPRIC'S
WORKSHOP ON CATHOLICS, DEMOCRACY

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LATIN AMERICA REPORT

MEXICO: CHIHUAHUA ARCHBISHOPRIC'S WORKSHOP ON CATHOLICS, DEMOCRACY

Mexico City DOCUMENTATION E INFORMACION CATOLICA in Spanish 8-15,
22, 29 Jan, 12 Feb 87 pp 4, 29-37, 53-57, 101-113

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MEXICO

CHIHUAHUA ARCHBISHOP CIRCULATES STUDY DOCUMENT ON DEMOCRACY

Workshop Procedures

Mexico City DOCUMENTACION E INFORMACION CATOLICA in Spanish 8-15 Jan 87 p 4

[Text] Editor's Note: On 26 November 1986, the archbishop of Chihuahua, Msgr Adalberto Almeida y Merino, submitted with Circular 8/86 a document addressed to his priests, deacons, members of religious orders and laymen, entitled "Workshop on Catholics and Democracy." Among other things, it says that each parish should organize a workshop of about 60 persons. The following is the text of the circular, which the domestic and foreign mass media are widely covering.

Esteemed Brethren: I wish you all the best in the Lord.

1. A yearning for democracy has become widespread among the people. There is talk of democracy everywhere, and democracy is thought to be a panacea and an answer to the crisis we are suffering. We Catholics must also make our specific contribution to the search for a more perfect democracy in Mexico. To fulfill this task, we Catholics must reflect realistically and in light of the faith on the values that must be respected in a genuine democracy. This is the meaning of the service that we are offering here to all Catholics and men of good will who choose to take advantage of it. This service on democracy is part of the social dimension of the faith, which is an integral part of evangelization.

2. I am sending you the first draft of a document entitled "Workshop on Democracy." It is an instrument for study and reflection and is still confidential. I want you to study this material individually and in groups and then to give us your input. Correct, add to or eliminate what you regard as inappropriate or inopportune, etc. We have appended to the document abundant quotations from the Magisterium of the Church to inspire and guide you in your reflection. You will discover that the first draft is based entirely on the Magisterium, but its wording and content can be greatly clarified and enriched to make it more useful and practical. I will now explain the procedure to you:

3. Form: There will be two stages to our reflection:

1) A workshop for reflection that is open to all. How to hold it is explained in the document. From it will come the input.

2) An official document that will embody the teachings of the church and the reflections and aspirations of the people.

4. Material: The following material is available:

1) Workshop on Democracy (Main document, preferably a copy for each participant)

2) Quotations from the Magisterium of the church on democracy (For the coordinators and those participants that want a copy)

3) Methodology (for the coordinators)

5. Observations:

Each pastoral zone should hold a workshop with representatives of all its parishes.

1) Each parish should hold at least one workshop with a group of about 60 people, directed and enlivened by those who staged the workshop in the zone.

2) The material will be available for use by other groups that wish to take advantage of it, such as apostolic organizations, grassroots communities, etc.

6. Methodology:

The methodological guidelines that we offer for holding the workshop are optional. Whoever wants to can acquire and use them. This is a very simple and popular but effective method. You can also study the material and answer questions in a different way that is better suited to the group.

7. Dates:

The workshop can be held in January, February or March for at least 2 hours a week or else over 1 or 2 weekends. The deadline is April 1987.

8. Responses:

The responses are to be handed in or sent to the archbishop. They should be brief and concise, typewritten and on letter paper. They should reflect the views expounded in each group.

9. Coordination:

The Church Pastoral Council (CEP) will be in charge of coordinating the workshop.

In the event of any doubt or difficulty, you can consult Father Dizan Vazquez or Father Agustin Becerra. I would like to thank you in advance for your

cooperation. Remember me in your prayers. It is with great pleasure that I send you my greetings and bless you.

Chihuahua, Chihuahua, 26 November 1986

Adalberto Almeida y Merino
Archbishop of Chihuahua

6-Part Document

Mexico City DOCUMENTACION E INFORMACION CATOLICA in Spanish 22, 29 Jan,
12 Feb 87

[Text of "Catholics and Democracy; Workshops in the Diocese of Chihuahua,"
issued by Archbishop of Chihuahua Msgr Adalberto Almeida y Merino, 26 Nov 86.]

[22 Jan 87 pp 29-37]

[Text] I. The Current Situation and the Aspirations of Our People

1. The Mexican people have always had a profound aspiration for freedom, democracy and social justice. The 1910 Revolution is clear proof of this in the 20th century.

The development of the revolution was not, however, uniform and steady. It was often betrayed and at present is clearly spent.

2. The elections this decade mark a new stage in the awareness and involvement of the masses. In particular, the historic election campaigns that culminated on 6 July 1986 in Chihuahua seem to herald a new era in the political history of our homeland.

3. Unfortunately, the regime has been unable to respond to the people's democratic aspirations. It has behaved like a party dictatorship, which presents a stark contrast between the democratic image that it projects of itself abroad and the restrictions that it imposes on its own citizens.

Instead of opening itself up to real pluralism, the government clings to primitive, closed methods. It has inhibited a sound political renovation by infringing on civil rights and vitiating the exercise of the vote.

The social and economic conditions in which the majority segments of our people (Indians, peasants, blue- and white-collar workers and other members of the middle and lower classes) are living confirm to us as well that democracy in Mexico is so imperfect that it has not achieved the just distribution of cultural and material goods to which the people are entitled.

Families often have no opportunity to educate their children. Young people are demanding their right to enter college or high centers of intellectual or technical-professional betterment. Women are demanding equal rights with men. The peasants are demanding higher prices and marketing assurances. The growing middle class is being hurt by the lack of expectations. Professionals

and technicians have begun leaving for more developed countries. Small-scale artisans and industrialists are being pressured by larger interests, and more than a few major industrialists in Latin America are becoming affiliated with international companies. We cannot ignore this almost universal phenomenon, in which the climate of collective anxiety in which we are living frustrates legitimate aspirations.

Quotations Pertaining to No 3:

1. Families often have no opportunity to educate their children. Young people are demanding their right to enter college or higher centers of intellectual or professional-technical betterment. Women (are demanding) equal rights with men. Peasants (are demanding) higher prices and marketing assurances. The growing middle class is hurt by the lack of expectations. Professionals and technicians have begun leaving for more developed countries. Small-scale artisans and industrialists are being pressured by larger interests, and more than a few major Latin American industrialists are affiliating with international companies. We cannot ignore this almost phenomenon, in which the climate of collective anxiety in which we are living frustrates legitimate aspirations (Medellin 2. Justice, I,1).

4. The social situation is going from bad to worse in Mexico in spite of the costly official propaganda. The country's economy is being run not only behind the people's backs but also to the detriment of their interests. The foreign debt, inflation, the high cost of living and unemployment are driving the people to despair. Health care, housing, education, etc are growing worse. Social ills, despair, disillusionment and hopelessness are on the rise.

5. We are witnessing today an increasingly widespread grassroots mobilization that has exceeded the scope of any opposition party, encompasses all segments of the population and has a more genuine democracy and more effective social justice as its goal.

6. The people are developing a growing awareness of what they do not want for Mexico. They are indignantly rejecting corruption, election fraud, absolutist forms of government behind the people's back and the social injustice that has doomed large segments of the population to poverty. This shared situation has even united segments that have very different ideologies, as they struggle together against this social cancer.

Quotation Pertaining to No 6:

1. Cultural, economic and social development consolidate in the masses a desire to participate more fully in the running of the political community...They also condemn all of the political methods that prevail in certain regions and that thwart civil or religious liberties, cause more people to be the victims of emotions or political crimes and divert the

exercise of authority from seeking the common good to acting in service to a group or to government officials themselves (*Gaudium et Spes*, 73).

7. As expected, however, we do not clearly see the path that we must travel and the ends that we must pursue to achieve Mexico's true liberation. We could assert that save for fleeting moments, if any, we have not had a true democratic experience in Mexico's long history. Democracy has been more of an ideal than a reality. Nevertheless, limitations and doubts about specific solutions notwithstanding, we detect in our people a clear-cut aspiration to enjoy a more democratic government and a more perfect distribution of opportunities and the goods needed to live.

Quotations Pertaining to No 7:

1. As a result of a keener awareness of human dignity, in several regions around the world an attempt has been made to establish a political and legal order that better protects individual rights such as the right of free assembly, of free self-organization, to express one's own opinions and to profess a religion privately and publicly. Because guaranteeing the rights of the individual is a necessary condition for citizens, as individuals or as members of associations, to take an active part in the life and government of the state. (*Gaudium et Spes*, 73, 2).

2. The move to a political dimension is another of man's current demands: greater participation in responsibilities and decision-making. This legitimate aspiration manifests itself above all as the cultural level rises, as a sense of freedom develops and as man better realizes how in a world faced with an uncertain future today's decisions affect tomorrow's life. In "Mater et Magistra" (31), John XXIII underscored how access to responsibilities is a fundamental demand of man's nature, a concrete exercise of his freedom and a path towards his development, and he indicated how in economic life, particularly in business, such participation in responsibilities should be assured. Today the spheres in which a reasonable participation in responsibilities and decision-making must be instituted and intensified have broadened, extending to society and politics. Naturally, the choices are increasingly complex; the considerations to be borne in mind, many, and the consequences, uncertain, even though the new sciences are striving to illuminate freedom in these important times. Therefore, although limits are at times imposed, such obstacles must not stem a broader involvement in the making and implementation of decisions. To cope with a growing technocracy, modern forms of democracy must be invented, thus giving each person the chance not only to inform himself and express his opinion but also to commit himself to a shared responsibility. Thus, groups of men gradually become communities of involvement and life. Thus, freedom, which is asserted all too often as independence vis-a-vis others, develops in its most profound human dimension: a commitment to and a striving for active, living solidarity. But to a Christian, man finds true liberation, renewed in the death and resurrection of the Lord, by abandoning himself to God, who liberates him (*Octogesima Adveniens*, 47).

Questions

- 1) How do you view the situation in Mexico with regard to the political involvement of all citizens?
- 2) Do you think that there is equal opportunity in Mexico for all citizens to get enough education and obtain what they need to live?
- 3) Do you think that the people want to perfect our democracy and achieve greater social justice more now than they used to? What makes you think so?

II. The Scope of and Limits to Church Involvement

8. In these important times of searching, the Catholic Church of Mexico and, specifically, the local church of Chihuahua, wants to accompany the people in the exodus towards freedom.

Quotations Pertaining to No 8:

1. When the Council proclaims man's most lofty vocation and the divine seed hidden in him, it offers mankind the church's sincere collaboration in achieving the universal brotherhood that is in keeping with that vocation. The church is not motivated by any earthly ambition. She wants only one thing: to continue, under the guidance of the Spirit, the work of Christ Himself, who came into the world to bear witness to the truth, to save and not to judge, to serve and not to be served (*Gaudium et Spes*, 3).
2. The Latin American church has a message for all men who on this continent "hunger and thirst for justice." It is God himself who in the fullness of the ages sent his Son to be made flesh and to liberate all men from all of the enslavements to which sin has subjected them: ignorance, hunger, poverty and oppression, in a word, the injustice and the hatred that have their origin in human selfishness (*Medellin, Justice*, II, 3).
3. The mystery of man is truly clarified only in the light of Christ. In the history of salvation, the divine work is an act of comprehensive liberation and of furthering man in every dimension, and its only motive is love...Just as the church wishes to serve the world by casting on it a light and a life that heals and raises the dignity of the human person, strengthens the unity of society and lends a deeper meaning and significance to all human activity...
4. The Christian quest for justice is a demand set forth in the Bible. As men, we are all humble stewards of goods. In the quest for salvation we must avoid the dualism that separates temporal tasks from sanctification. Even though we are surrounded by imperfections, we are men of hope. We believe that love for Christ and for our brethren will be not only the great force that frees us from injustice and oppression but also the inspiration for social justice, understood to mean an approach to life and a motivation for the comprehensive development of our peoples (*Medellin, Justice*, II, 4-5).

5. The church, the people of God, will lend her aid to those who are underprivileged in any way and in any sphere of society, so that they realize their own rights and know how to assert them. To this end she will use her moral force and seek the cooperation of the appropriate professionals and institutions (Medellin, Justice, III, 20).

6. It thus clear that the Christian community, in communion with and guided by its legitimate shepherds, is responsible for the evangelization, liberation and furtherance of mankind (Puebla 1979, No 474).

7. The church, as Mother and Teacher who is an expert on mankind, must discern and illuminate, on the basis of the Gospel and her social teachings, the situations, the systems, the ideologies and the politics of the continent. She must do so even if she knows that attempts will be made to make a tool of her message (Ibid, No 511).

8. Therefore, she sheds the light of her word on politics and ideology, as another service to her peoples and as a secure guide for all those who in one way or another must assume social responsibilities (Ibid, No 512).

9. The Christian faith does not scorn politics; on the contrary, it holds it in the highest esteem (Ibid, No 514).

10. Still speaking in general, without distinguishing the role that falls to her various members, the church feels that she has a duty and a right to be present in this sphere of activity (politics), because Christianity must evangelize all of human existence, including politics. She thus criticizes those who tend to reduce the scope of the faith to personal or family life, excluding the professions, economics, society or politics, as if sin, love, prayer and forgiveness were not important there (Ibid, No 515).

11. Indeed, the need for the church's presence in politics stems from the very essence of the Christian faith: the Lordship of Christ, which extends throughout life. Christ is the definitive seal of brotherhood (Ibid, No 516).

12. It is incumbent on Christian communities to objectively analyze the situation in each country, to shed light on it through the unalterable words of the Gospel, to deduce the principles of reflection, standards of judgment and guidelines for action in accordance with the social teachings of the church...

13. It is up to these Christian communities to discern, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, in communion with the responsible bishops and in a dialogue with other Christian brethren and all men of good will, the options and the commitments that should be made to accomplish the social, political and economic transformations that seem urgently necessary in each instance (Octogesima Adveniens, 4).

14. The church is determined to respond to the concerns of contemporary man, who is harshly oppressed and eager for freedom. The political and economic management of society is not a direct part of her mission. However, the Lord Jesus has entrusted her with the word of truth that can illuminate minds.

Divine love, which is her life, compels her to make truly common cause with every suffering man. If her members remain faithful to this mission, the Holy Spirit, the source of freedom, will live in them and bear fruits of justice and peace in their family, professional and social environment (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; Christian Freedom and Liberation, 61).

15. The church does not stray from her mission when she speaks about promoting justice in human societies and when she commits the lay faithful to work in them in accordance with their own calling. Nevertheless, she tries to see to it that this mission is not absorbed by or reduced to temporal concerns. Thus, the church is interested in clearly and firmly maintaining both the oneness of and the distinction between evangelization and the promotion of man: oneness because she seeks the comprehensive good of man; distinction because these two tasks are separate parts of her mission (Ibid, 64).

16. Faithful to her goal, the church sheds the light of the Gospel on earthly realities, so that human beings are cured of their ills and see their dignity raised. The cohesiveness of society through justice and peace is thus promoted and strengthened. The church is also faithful to her mission when she denounces the deviations, enslavements and oppressions of which men are victim.

17. She is faithful to her mission when she opposes attempts to establish a society from which God is absent, whether by conscious opposition or culpable negligence.

18. Lastly, she is faithful to her mission when she voices her judgment on political movements that seek to combat poverty and oppression in accordance with theories and methods of action that run counter to the Gospel and to man himself.

19. The ethics of the Gospel, with the strength of grace, certainly give man new prospects with new demands. And they help to perfect and elevate a moral dimension that is already part of human nature and with which the church concerns herself, aware that it is the common birthright of all men as such (Ibid, 65).

20. In the social sphere, the church has always sought to perform a dual function: to illuminate minds and help them to discover the truth and to distinguish the path to follow amid the various beckoning doctrines, and to spread the energies of the Gospel with a real desire to serve effectively. Is it not out of faithfulness to this desire that the church has sent priests on apostolic missions among the workers to share the full worker experience and to bear witness to their appeals and quest? (Octogesima Adveniens, 48, L'OSSEVATORE ROMANO, Spanish-language edition, 16 May 1971, No 20 (124), p 11).

9. The church offers to accompany all men of good will, even if they are not Catholic or Christians, and to make available to them the reflections accumulated by the church on her social doctrine down through the centuries, reflections that are not without many human failings and errors, which have been humbly corrected as the Lord has enabled her to better understand her own vocation, availing himself quite often of historical movements that have arisen outside and even in opposition to her.

Quotations Pertaining to No 9:

1. The People of God, moved by the faith, which motivates them to believe that what guides them is the Spirit of the Lord, which fills the universe, seek to discern true signs of the presence or purpose of God from among the events, demands and desires in which they are involved along with their contemporaries. The faith illuminates everything with a new light and manifests the divine plan for man's entire calling. It thus guides the mind towards fully human solutions (*Gaudium et Spes*, 11).

2. Leaving aside the judgment of history about the shortcomings (that the members of the church have often had), we must, however, remain aware of them and combat them with the utmost energy so that they do not hinder the spread of the Gospel. Likewise, the church realizes from her centuries-long experience how much more she must mature in her relationship with the world (*Ibid*, 43).

3. While it is true that in her evangelizing mission the church had to bear the burden of frailties, alliances with earthly powers, an incomplete pastoral vision and the destructive force of sin, it must also be recognized that evangelization, which has made Latin America the "continent of hope," has been much stronger than the shadows that have regrettably accompanied it throughout history (Puebla 1979, No 10).

4. The church strongly supports man's quest and is in tune with his yearnings and hopes, aspiring only to serve man, encourage his efforts, illuminate his path and enable him to grasp the transcendent value of his life and action (*Ibid*, No 145).

5. The church has made her contribution to the liberation and promotion of man through a series of doctrinal guidelines and criteria for action that we are wont to call "the social teaching of the church." Its source is the Holy Scripture, the teachings of the fathers and major theologians of the church and the Magisterium,, especially under the most recent popes. As apparent from the outset, the teachings contain permanently valid points that are based on an anthropology that is born of the message of Christ himself and on the timeless values of Christian ethics. However, there are also points that can change to fit the conditions of each country and each era (*Ibid*, No 472).

6. The primary goal of this social teaching is the personal dignity of man, the image of God, and the protection of his inalienable rights. The church has gradually made her teachings clearer in the various spheres of endeavor:

society, economics, politics and culture, in accordance with needs... (Ibid, No 475).

7. The social teaching of the church was born when the message of the Gospel and its demands (set forth in the supreme commandment to love God and one's neighbor and in justice) confronted the problems that arise in society. It became a doctrine by utilizing the resources of knowledge and the social sciences; it addresses the ethical aspects of life and takes into account the technical aspects of problems but always to judge them from a moral standpoint.

8. This teaching, aimed essentially at action, is conducted as a function of the changing circumstances of history. Therefore, although it is based on ever valid principles, it also entails contingent judgments. Far from constituting a closed system, it is permanently open to the new issues that never cease to arise; moreover, it requires the contribution of all charisms, experiences and knowledge.

9. The church, which is an expert on mankind, offers in her social doctrine a set of principles for reflection, of standards of judgment and of guidelines for action so that the in-depth changes that conditions of poverty and injustice demand are carried out in a manner that serves the true welfare of men (Christian Freedom and Liberation, 72).

10. The guidance received from the church's social doctrine should stimulate the acquisition of indispensable technical and scientific knowledge, the search for the moral development of character and the intensification of spiritual life. In offering principles and wise counsel, this doctrine does not make education in political prudence unnecessary, because such education is required for administering human affairs (Ibid, 80).

11. In the face of so many new questions, the church makes an effort at reflection to respond, within her own field, to man's hopes. Does the fact that today's problems seem new, because of their breadth and urgency, mean that man is unprepared to solve them? The church's social teaching, with all of its dynamism, accompanies man on his quest. Although she does not intervene to lend authenticity to a given structure or to propose a prefabricated model, she does not limit herself merely to reminding man of certain general principles. She engages in mature reflection in contact with changing situations in this world, under the motivation of the Gospel as a source of renewal, from the time that its message is accepted in its totality and in its demands. The church proceeds with her characteristic sensitivity, marked by a disinterested desire to serve and attend to the poorest among us. Finally, she is enriched by the fruitful experience of many centuries, which enables her, amid her permanent concerns, to make the daring and creative innovations that the current world situation demands (Octogesima Adveniens, 42).

10. The church renders this service of discernment while acknowledging the full autonomy of temporal activities (science, politics, etc) vis-a-vis religious activities.

Quotations Pertaining to No 10:

1. Many of our contemporaries seem to fear that too close a bond between human activity and religion will impair the autonomy of man, society or science
2. If by autonomy of earthly affairs we mean that the things that have been created and society itself should enjoy their own laws and values, which man must discover, use and gradually put in order, then the demand for autonomy is absolutely legitimate...By the very nature of creation, all things have their own consistency, truth and virtues and their own regulated order, which man must respect by acknowledging the individual methodology of each science or art...
3. But if "autonomy of the temporal" means that created things are independent of God and that man can use them without reference to the Creator, no believer will fail to see the falsehood of those words (Gaudium et Spes, 36).
4. The church acknowledges the proper autonomy of the temporal (Ibid), which applies to governments, parties, labor unions and other social and political groups. The purpose that the Lord assigned to the church is religious, and therefore, when she becomes involved in this field, she is not motivated by any political, economic or social intention...(Puebla 1979, No 519).
11. We accept the separation of church and state, which benefits the former no less than the latter, as a positive accomplishment of peoples (attained not always with the understanding of the church).

Quotations Pertaining to No 11:

1. The political community and the church are independent and autonomous, each in its own sphere. Yet, they both serve the personal and social vocation of man, in different capacities. The better the two cultivate wholesome cooperation, the more effectively they will perform this service for the benefit of all (Gaudium et Spes, 76).
2. The church needs to be more independent every day of worldly powers, so that she can thus have broad latitude to fulfill her apostolic mission without interference: worship, the education of the faith, and the wide range of activities that lead the faithful to bring the moral imperatives that stem from the faith into their private, family and social lives. Thus, free from commitments, with her testimony and teaching alone, the church will be more credible and better heard. In this way, the very exercise of power will be evangelized, for the sake of the common good (Puebla 1979, No 44).
3. Founded to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and not to achieve any earthly power, the church clearly asserts that the two kingdoms are different, just as the two powers, church and civil, are each supreme in its own domain (Populorum Progressio, 13).

12. Nevertheless, this separation must not be understood in the sense that wholesome cooperation between the two entities is impossible for the benefit of citizens who by and large are members of both at the same time. Such cooperation must be conducted with mutual respect for the nature and mission of both church and state.

Quotations Pertaining to No 12:

1. Temporal affairs and the supernatural are, to be sure, closely linked, and the church herself uses temporal means because her mission so requires. She does not, however, place her hopes on privileges accorded by civilian government. What is more, she will renounce certain legitimately acquired rights as soon as she sees that their use could taint the purity of her testimony or that new conditions demand another approach (*Gaudium et Spes*, 76).

13. The Mexican church calls for a judicial reappraisal of the separation between church and state, not to backtrack on a status that she fully accepts, but to perfect it. The church feels that rather than an authentic separation between church and state that was effected by mutual agreement and with full respect for the nature of the two entities, what Mexico has is a unilateral decision that violates the rights of the church, beginning with a failure to recognize her legal status.

14. So that both the rights of the state and the legitimate freedom of the church are respected, for the sake of wholesome cooperation between the two entities for the good of the nation, it is indispensable to have a clear idea of what politics is and to distinguish between "politics in the strict sense" (or partisan politics) and "politics in the broad sense" (or politics for the common good).

Quotations Pertaining to No 14:

1. Two concepts of politics and political commitment must be distinguished. First, there is politics in its broadest sense, which seeks the common good both domestically and internationally. Its aim is to specify the fundamental values of each community...It also defines the means and the ethics of social relations. In its broad sense, politics concerns the (entire) church and, therefore, her shepherds, her ministers of unity. It is a way of worshiping the one God, deconsecrating and, at the same time, consecrating the world to Him (Puebla 1979, No 521).

2. The church thus helps to promote the values that ought to inspire politics, by interpreting in each nation the aspirations of its people, especially the yearnings of those whom society tends to bypass. She does so through her testimony, her teaching and her manifold pastoral activities (*Ibid*, No 522).

3. Second, this fundamental political activity is performed normally through groups of citizens who propose to achieve and exercise political power to

resolve economic, political and social problems in accordance with their own views and ideologies. In this regard, we can speak of "party politics." The ideologies developed by these groups, even if they are inspired by Christian doctrine, can come to different conclusions. Therefore, no political party, no matter how inspired it is by the church's doctrine, can claim to represent all the faithful, inasmuch as its specific program can never have absolute value for all (Ibid, No 523).

4. The common good (that is to say, the living conditions that make associations possible and enable each of their members to readily develop themselves to their fullest) is becoming increasingly interdependent and universal and, therefore, entails rights and obligations that concern all mankind. Every social group must bear in mind the needs and legitimate aspirations of other groups. Furthermore, they must bear very much in mind the common good of the entire human family.

5. At the same time, there is a growing awareness of the exalted dignity of the human person, of his superiority over things and of his universal and inviolable rights and duties. Hence, man must be given all that he needs to live a truly human life, such as food, clothing, shelter, the right to freely choose a state of life and to start a family, the right to an education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to proper information, to act in accordance with his conscience, to protection of privacy and to rightful freedom in religious matters as well.

6. Hence, the social order and its steady development must be subordinated at all times to the welfare of the individual, inasmuch as the order of things must be subordinated to the order of individuals, not vice versa. The Lord Himself so indicated when he said that the Sabbath had been made for man, not man for the Sabbath. The social order must be improved every day, founded on truth, built on justice, animated by love. But it must find an ever more human balance in freedom. To fulfill all of these objectives, we must proceed with changes in attitudes and sweeping reforms in society.

7. God's spirit, who with a marvelous providence directs the unfolding of time and renews the face of the earth, is not absent from this development. The ferment of the Gospel has also aroused and continues to arouse in man's heart the irresistible requirements of his dignity (Gaudium et Spes, 26).

8. The individuals, families and various groups that make up the civic community are aware of their own inadequacy in achieving a fully human life and sense the need for a broader community in which each would contribute his energies every day to the ever better attainment of the common good. They thus set up the political community according to various institutional models. Hence, the political community exists for that common good in which the community finds its full justification and meaning and from which it derives its pristine and proper legitimacy. The common good embraces the sum of those conditions of social life by which individuals, families and groups can more completely achieve their own fulfillment (Ibid, 74).

15. With regard to laymen, the church's contribution has to do with a resolute, individual and community commitment, at all levels of the struggle

for democracy, to make Mexico a more just and democratic nation. Catholic laymen are entitled to participate actively both in the politics of the common and in party politics.

Quotations Pertaining to No 15:

1. The Council exhorts Christians, as citizens of the temporal city and the eternal city, to faithfully discharge their earthly duties, guided at all times by the spirit of the Gospel. Christians are wrong if, citing the pretext that we have no permanent city here because we seek the future city (see Hebrews, 13, 14) they feel that they can shirk temporal tasks. They are forgetting that the faith itself obliges them to perform all these tasks to perfection, each according to his proper vocation. But a no less serious error is made by those who, in contrast, think that they can devote themselves entirely to temporal matters, as if they were altogether divorced from religious life, thinking that religion consists solely of certain acts of worship or the discharge of certain moral obligations...
2. Secular duties and activities belong properly, though not exclusively, to laymen..It is up to the well-formed lay conscience to see to it that the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city (Gaudium et Spes, 43).
3. Christians who take an active part in the economic and social movement of our time and struggle for justice and charity should be convinced that they can make a great contribution to the welfare of mankind and to world peace. Whether as individuals or in associations, let them be an example in this field (Ibid, 72).
4. It is highly important...to have a proper view of the relations between the political community and the church and to distinguish clearly between what Christians do in their own name as citizens, whether as individuals or in associations, in accordance with their consciences, and what they do in the name of the church, in communion with her shepherds (Ibid, 76).
5. Party politics is properly the field of laymen. It is in keeping with their lay status to establish and organize political parties with the appropriate ideology and strategy to achieve their legitimate ends (Puebla 1979, No 524).
6. It is not up to the shepherds of the church to intervene directly in politics and in the organization of social life. This task is part of the vocation of the laymen who act on their own initiative with their fellow citizens. They must perform it with the awareness that the church's goal is to extend the Kingdom of Christ so that all men are saved and accordingly the world is indeed oriented towards Christ (Christian Freedom and Liberation, 80).
7. We once again urgently address an appeal for action to all Christians. In our encyclical on the Development of Peoples [Populorum Progressio] we stressed that all must get down to work: "Laymen must take up the renovation of the temporal order as their own task. If the function of the hierarchy is

to teach and authentically interpret the moral principles to be followed in this field, it is up to them, through their initiatives and without waiting passively for instructions and guidelines, to imbue the mind, the customs, the laws and the structures of their community with the Christian spirit." Let each person examine himself to see what he has done so far and what he must do henceforth. It is not enough to recall principles, to assert intentions, to underscore injustices that cry out and to make prophetic claims. Such words will not carry real weight unless they are each accompanied by a keener awareness of one's own responsibility and by effective action.

It is too easy to foist off on others the blame for injustices, if at the same time a person does not realize how he himself is party to them and how a personal conversion is first necessary. Such fundamental humility will remove all inflexibility and sectarianism from one's actions. It will also ward off discouragement in the face of a task that seems inordinate. A Christian derives his hope primarily from knowing that the Lord is working with us in the world, perpetuating in His Body, which is the church, and through the church in all mankind, the Redemption that was consummated on the Cross and that burst forth in victory on the morning of the Resurrection. It also derives from knowing that other men are undertaking convergent actions of justice and peace, because in spite of apparent indifference, the heart of each man harbors a desire for fraternal life and a thirst for justice and peace that he tries to develop (Octogesima Adveniens, 48).

16. It is up to the church hierarchy to accompany laymen in this noble struggle, offering them the service of discernment in the light of the faith so that their actions are always in keeping with what is good and just and reject what is not.

Quotations Pertaining to No 16:

1. Laymen may expect spiritual guidance and motivation from pastors. But let them not think that their pastors are always able to immediately give them a specific solution to all problems, however grave, that may arise. That is not their mission...Bishops, who have received the mission of ruling the church of God, should, together with their priests, so preach the message of Christ that all of the temporal activities of the faithful are bathed by the light of the Gospel (Gaudium et Spes, 43).

2. It is up to us shepherds of the church to educate minds, to inspire, to stimulate and to help guide all of the initiatives that contribute to man's fulfillment. It is also up to us to denounce everything that runs counter to justice and destroys peace (Medellin, Peace, III, 20, p 75).

3. Once again we wish to declare that, in addressing social, economic and political problems, we do not do so as teachers in these fields, as scientists, but rather from a pastoral perspective, as interpreters of our peoples, confident of their yearnings, especially the poorest among them...What do we have to offer you? Like Peter, hearing the entreaty of the paralyzed man at the door to the temple, we say to you, in considering the

magnitude of the structural challenges of our day and age: We have neither gold nor silver to give you, but we give you what we have: in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise and walk (See Acts, 3, 6). And the sick man arose and proclaimed the wonders of the Lord (Puebla 1979, Message to the Peoples of Latin America, 3).

4. The layman finds in the church's social teaching the appropriate criteria in light of the Christian view of man. For its part, the hierarchy will lend man its solidarity, furthering his development and his spiritual life and promoting his creativity so that he will seek options that are ever more consistent with the common good and the needs of the weakest (Puebla 1979, No 525).

17. The church is aware that the clergy should not take part in running the nation (partisan politics), but she does contend that pastors have a right and a duty to orient the practice of politics from a strictly moral standpoint and to judge in the light of the faith what good and what evil is being done in this field, because man's eternal destiny is also at stake in political activities. Politics in a broad sense, that is, the search for the common good, is a right of every human being and, therefore, of the ministers of the church.

Quotations Pertaining to No 17:

1. The mission that Christ gave His church is not political, economic or social. The purpose that He assigned her is religious. But from this religious mission stem functions, enlightenment and energies that can serve to establish and consolidate the human community according to the divine law (Gaudium et Spes, 42).

2. The church...founded on the Redeemer's love, helps to spread the kingdom of justice and charity ever wider within each nation and among nations. By preaching the truth of the Gospel and shedding light on all areas of human activity through her doctrine and through the testimony of Christians, she respects and also fosters the political freedom and responsibility of citizens (Ibid, 76).

3. It is legitimate at all times and everywhere for the church to preach the faith with true freedom, to teach her social doctrine and to perform her mission among men without hindrance whatever and to pass moral judgment, even on political matters, whenever fundamental individual rights or the salvation of souls so require, using only those means that are consistent with the Gospel and the general welfare (Ibid).

4. Our evangelization is marked by certain specific concerns, among them: furthering the dignity of man, the liberation from all enslavements and idolatries, and the need to make the vigor of the Gospel penetrate decision-making centers, "the sources of inspiration and the models of social and political life" (Puebla 1979, Nos 342, 344, 345).

5. Because the pastors of the church must concern themselves with unity...they will divest themselves of any partisan political ideology that might condition their judgments and attitudes. They will thus be free to evangelize politics like Christ, on the basis of the Gospel, without partisanship or ideology.

6. Priests, who are also ministers of unity, and deacons must make the same personal renunciation. If they are actively involved in partisan politics, they will run the risk of absolutizing and radicalizing it, given their vocation to be "men of the absolute. But in the economic and social and mainly in the political sphere, where several specific choices are available, priests should not be directly involved in decision-making or leadership or the formulation of solutions" (Ibid, No 527).

7. Members of religious orders...must also resist the temptation to engage in partisan politics, lest they confuse evangelical values with a given ideology (Ibid, No 528).

Questions

- 1) Do you think that Christians have something specific to contribute to the search to improve democracy and social justice in our country?
- 2) Do you think that the church should concern herself only with "souls" and the "beyond" or should she also concern herself with man's condition in this life? Why?
- 3) What do you think lay Catholics can contribute to the search for better social and political conditions?
- 4) Do you think that the shepherds of the church (bishops, priests, deacons, members of religious orders) should cooperate in some way in this search? What can they do? What should they not do?
- 5) Do you think that without at all jeopardizing the separation between church and state in Mexico, the two can work together somehow for the good of the citizenry? If they ought to, in what way?

Editorial Note About the Workshops on Catholics and Democracy

On the initiative of Msgr Adalberto Almeida y Merino, the archbishop of Chihuahua, Workshops on Catholics and Democracy are being organized in his archdiocese. Workshop means a group study of certain issues. The issues are discussed, and then conclusions are drawn. All of this, which we call "enrichment," will go to the archbishop and on the basis of it an official document will be drafted, embodying the teachings of the church and the reflections and aspirations of the people (See DIC [DOCUMENTACION E INFORMACION CATOLICA] 15, 1987, p 4, No 3, Paragraph 2). The following are the issues or workshops:

- I. The Current Situation and Our People's Aspirations
- II. The Scope of and Limits to Church Involvement
- III. Various Forms of Government

IV. The Church and Democracy
V. Towards a Comprehensive Democracy
VI. Education for Democracy

For reasons of space, we will publish only the first two workshop issues. As for the quotations from the documents of the Magisterium, we will include them after each of the numbers into which the workshop is structured and in a different font. Thus, the text of the workshop and the Magisterium will be more readily distinguishable.

For their part, the mass media, especially the print media, are publishing extensive articles and commentaries on the archbishop of Chihuahua's initiative. Subscribers to our SELPREDIC [DIC Press Selections] service will notice how views and opinions are interspersed throughout this issue of DIC. Not everyone is in agreement, however. A majority of people apparently oppose the workshops, and it is noteworthy that political parties that are not exactly distinguished by their fondness for the clergy or the church approve of the archbishop of Chihuahua's initiative.

[29 Jan 87 pp 53-57]

[Text] III. Various Forms of Government

18. To attain the perfection that they deserve by virtue of their dignity as individuals in every field, men have from time immemorial formed societies and established various forms of government.

Quotations Pertaining to No 18:

1. The social nature of man shows that the development of the human person and the advance of society itself are closely linked. For the beginning, the subject and the end of all social institutions is and must be the human person, which by its very nature has an absolute need for social life.
2. Social life is not an accidental new burden on man. Hence, through his dealings with others, through reciprocal services and through fraternal dialogue, social life enhances all of man's qualities and enables him to fulfill his destiny (*Gaudium et Spes*, 25).
3. The individuals, families and various groups that make up the civic community are aware of their own inadequacy in achieving a fully human life and sense the need for a broader community in which each would contribute his energies every day to the ever better attainment of the common good. They thus set up the political community according to various institutional models. Hence, the political community exists for that common good in which the community finds its full justification and meaning and from which it derives its pristine and proper legitimacy. The common good embraces the sum of those conditions of social life by which individuals, families and groups can more completely achieve their own fulfillment.

4. It is therefore obvious that the political community and public authority are based on human nature and hence belong to an order foreordained by God, even though the choice of government and the method of selecting leaders is left up to the free choice of citizens (*Gaudium et Spes*, 74).

19. Throughout history and in the various nations, there has been a wide range of forms of government, from the most liberating to the most enslaving. All of them coexist in the 20th century.

20. Indeed, the 20th century has witnessed and continues to witness totalitarian forms of government, in which the people are completely excluded from the making of the major political decisions that affect everyone; authoritarian forms of government, in which the involvement of the people is significantly restricted or insufficiently guaranteed, and democratic forms of government, in which a serious attempt is made through various institutional channels to enable all citizens to participate.

21. Even while acknowledging that the various forms of government that a people adopts depend on the special circumstances of its history and its culture, the church cannot be indifferent to all of them. The criterion for assessing them must always be man, the human person, whose fundamental rights as an individual and in groups must always be respected. Based on this criterion, the church rejects totalitarian and authoritarian regimes as forms of government that are unworthy of man.

Quotations Pertaining to No 21:

1. Hence, the social order and its steady development must at all times be subordinated to the welfare of the human person, inasmuch as the order of things must always be subordinated to the order of individuals, not vice versa. The Lord Himself so indicated when he said that the Sabbath had been made for man, not man for the Sabbath (*Gaudium et Spes*, 26).

2. Human institutions, both public and private, should strive to serve the dignity and purpose of man. They must struggle vigorously against any social or political slavery and, under any political system, respect the fundamental rights of man (*Ibid*, 29).

3. The specific ways...in which the political community organizes its fundamental structure and regulates public authority can vary in accordance with the genius of each people and its history. But they must always aim at developing men who are cultured, peace-loving and benevolently respectful of others for the good of the whole human family (*Ibid*, 74).

4. For their part, citizens both as individuals and in groups should avoid granting government excessive power and inopportune ask the state for excessive favors or advantages, at the risk of weakening the sense of responsibility of individuals, families and social groups...It is inhuman when government lapses into totalitarian or dictatorial forms that violate the rights of the individual or of social groups (*Ibid*, 75).

5. Sin corrupts the use that men make of power, causing them to abuse the rights of others, at times more or less absolutely. This occurs most strikingly in the exercise of political power, because it is in politics in which decisions are made that determine the overall organization of the community's temporal welfare and because politics lend itself more readily not only to abuses by those who wield power but also to the absolutizing of power itself by means of the police. Political power is deified when it is regarded as absolute. Therefore, the totalitarian use of power is a form of idolatry, and as such the church rejects it completely (Puebla 1979, No 500).

6. Political action (is it necessary to underscore that we are talking here above all about an activity, not an ideology?) must be based on a blueprint for society that is consistent in its specific means and in its aspirations and that is inspired by a comprehensive concept of man's destiny and of his different social expressions. It is not up to either the state or the political parties that would shut themselves off to try and impose an ideology through means that would lead to a dictatorship of minds, which is the worst one of all. It is up to cultural and religious groups (given their open membership) to develop in society in a disinterested manner and along their own path these ultimate convictions about the nature, origin and purpose of man and society (Octogesima Adveniens, 25).

22. The church recognizes that all peoples harbor growing aspirations to democracy and that democracy tends to come about in different ways through experiences whose value is unequal and at times rudimentary.

Quotations Pertaining to No 22:

1. The dual aspiration to equality and participation seeks to promote a democratic society. Various models have been proposed, some have already been tried, none is completely satisfactory, and the search is still going on among ideological and pragmatic tendencies. Christians have an obligation to take part in this search, both for the organization and for the life of political society (Octogesima Adveniens, 24).

Questions

- 1) Why does the church morally reject totalitarian and authoritarian forms of government?
- 2) What does the form of government in Mexico seem most like in practice: totalitarian, authoritarian or democratic? Why?
- 3) What forms of government are there in other countries. Mention them.

IV. The Church and Democracy

23. The church recognizes that democratic regimes are better able to safeguard fundamental human rights and guarantee the conditions needed to achieve social justice.

24. We also recognize that although democracy in the modern world did not spring up from ideological ground that had been fertilized by evangelical values, the church was not always clear-thinking or bold enough to appreciate its initial manifestations, as it instead felt committed and dangerously bound to systems that history was relegating to the past (for example, the role of the hierarchy in the struggle for national independence). It often missed the historical opportunity to educate and encourage by being the first to point out new paths to a mankind that was eager for freedom and betterment, while always remaining faithful to its sole Savior and Lord of history. It failed to see the signs of the times and to hear the voice of God speaking to it through the stammerings and ambiguities of movements that did not always arise from within it. The church must acknowledge this humbly, express a sincere "mea culpa" and, thus renewed, resume the path of disinterested service to God through man.

Quotations Pertaining to No 24:

1. Led by the Holy Spirit, Mother Church unceasingly exhorts her children to purify and renew themselves so that the sign of Christ shines more brightly on the face of the church (Gaudium et Spes, 43).

2. It is in the world's interest to acknowledge the church as a social reality and a force of history. Likewise, the church acknowledges the many benefits that she has gained from the historic development of mankind...Furthermore, the church admits that she has profited greatly and still can profit from the antagonism of those who oppose or even persecute her (Gaudium et Spes, 44).

3. In truth, the Gospel has been a force for freedom and progress in human history, even temporal history, and it continues to unceasingly offer itself as a force for brotherhood, unity and peace. It is not without reason that Christ is honored by the faithful as the "Hope of nations and the Savior of them all" (Ad Gentes, No 8).

25. The church's openness to and even forthright support for and promotion of democracy today should not be seen as an identification between the two. The church does not identify with any system or ideology, nor does it seek in any way to canonize the term "democracy." First, because this word can conceal different realities that are not always of equal value. Second, because even if it is understood in its finest sense, any system or ideology is transitory and tends over time to be outstripped. Having learned from history, the church cannot commit itself definitively to any system of government that will become obsolete and be outstripped by successive waves of mankind's development, with which mankind is moving forward towards ever more perfect forms of organization.

Quotations Pertaining to No 25:

1. The church, which by virtue of her mission and area of responsibility is not to be confused with the political community nor is bound to any political system, is both a sign and a safeguard of the transcendent nature of the human person (*Gaudium et Spes*, 76).
2. Experienced in human affairs, the church, without attempting to interfere in any way in the politics of states, "seeks but one goal: to carry forward the work of Christ Himself under the leadership of the spirit of friendship. And Christ entered this world to bear witness to the truth, to save, not to judge, to serve, not to be served" (*Populorum Progressio*, 13).
26. What interests the church is what is seen today as the essence of democracy: respect for the dignity of the individual, the quest for the common good, the effective participation of all citizens in the decisions that affect them, access for all to economic and cultural goods, respect for fundamental human rights, etc. These characteristics that we attribute to democracy are today common aspirations of mankind, square perfectly with the evangelical concept of man and will have to be part of any system that may appear in the future. Any system from which they are absent must be described as step backward.

Quotations Pertaining to No 26:

1. (The church) has no greater desire than to develop herself freely in service to all under any kind of political system that recognizes the fundamental rights of the individual and of the family and the imperatives of the common good (*Gaudium et Spes*, 42).
2. Value judgments also apply to economic, social and political systems. The church's social doctrine does not propose any system in particular, but its fundamental principles suggest, above all, to what extent the existing systems meet or fail to meet the demands of human dignity (*Christian Freedom and Liberation*, 74).
3. (Democracy) entails a society of free individuals who are similar in dignity and who enjoy equal fundamental rights; who are aware of their status, their duties and their rights, while respecting the freedom of others; who can each make use of their finest talents to serve the common good and who can in an effort of solidarity sustain those of their brethren who have been least favored by nature or circumstance. Those who wield power in a democracy must not allow themselves to be carried away by highhandedness or favoritism, nor seek gain for themselves but rather for their country. To this end, they must accept the necessary controls exercised by national representation and imposed by fundamental laws that have been freely accepted and reasonably promulgated. Their impartial and vigorous authority must show no preference except for the weakest (Paul VI, *Message on Democracy*, Sem. Soc. de Fra., 1963).

27. Without trying to apply the idea of "democracy" (which is sociological in origin) to her internal structures, the church does feel that her theological nature is compatible with the application to her authority of certain elements that she has in common with civilian democracy, such as:

- Recognition of the equal dignity of all her members;
- Joint responsibility and participation of all in decision-making and tasks, in accordance with the vocation of each person;
- The exercise of authority through dialogue;
- Respect for the rights and dignity of the individual, etc.

Indeed, from human dignity and freedom stem the demands for communion and participation among all members of the church, as the mission of an authority exercised with evangelical purpose and as a sign of an authentic evangelization.

28. A genuinely democratic system that does not base its authority on force and mutual fear between it and the citizenry, has no reason to shun a fruitful dialogue with the church, both the Catholic Church and the other churches and religions, and even to consult regularly with them on matters that concern the common good.

29. Experience shows that totalitarian and authoritarian regimes have the most problems implementing a proper separation between church and state, inasmuch as owing to the tendency of these regimes to exercise absolute control over all intermediate associations, the separation turns in practice into an abusive interference by the state in strictly religious matters.

30. We must not forget that there are various options and possibilities even under a democracy. Therefore, the existence of different parties and approaches is part and parcel of democracy, and in any event the decision as to their greater or lesser acceptability will be up to the majority. Catholics must realize that a single faith can motivate them to make different choices without shattering the unity of the church in so doing. They must bear in mind, however, that there are limits to their political involvement, because it could them place them in a situation that is at odds with the moral principles of Christianity.

Quotations Pertaining to No 30:

1. It will often happen that the Christian view of life will suggest some specific solution under certain circumstances. Yet it may and does often happen, and legitimately so, that other of the faithful, guided by equal sincerity, judge the same matter differently. In such cases of divergent solutions, even against the intentions of both sides, many tend to readily identify their solution with the message of the Gospel. All should understand that in such cases no one is allowed to claim the church's authority exclusively for his opinion. They should try to enlighten each other through

honest dialogue, preserving mutual charity and looking out above all for the common good (*Gaudium et Spes*, 43).

2. Christians must recognize that various legitimate, though conflicting views can be held on temporal matters and must respect their fellow citizens when they honorably promote such views, even in groups (*Ibid*, 75).

3. Social action, which could imply a plurality of specific paths, will always be geared towards the common good and will conform to the Gospel message and to the teachings of the church. Differences of opinion must not be allowed to impair collaboration, to eventually paralyze efforts and to cause confusion in the Christian people.

4. Today, Christians are attracted to socialist currents and the various developments thereof. They see in them several aspirations that they carry within themselves in the name of their faith. They feel that they are part of this historic current and seek to act within it. Now then, this historic current, as expressed in a single word, takes a variety of forms on the different continents and in different cultures, although it has been and still is inspired in many instances by ideologies that are incompatible with the faith. Careful discernment is imperative. All too often Christians who are attracted to socialism tend to idealize it in overly noble terms: a desire for justice, solidarity and equality. They refuse to admit the pressures of the historic socialist movements, which are still conditioned by their original ideology. We must establish distinctions, which will guide specific choices, between the various manifestations of socialism (a noble aspiration and a quest for a more just society, the historic movements that have a political organization and purpose, an ideology that seeks to provide an all-embracing, autonomous view of man). Nevertheless, these distinctions should not lead us to view these manifestations as completely separate and independent. The definite link that exists between them, depending on the circumstances, must be clearly pointed out, and such discernment will enable Christians to decide what degree of commitment they can make to such paths, thus safeguarding the values, particularly freedom, responsibility and openness to spiritual life, that guarantee man's comprehensive development (*Octogesima Adveniens*, 31).

5. Moreover, we are witnessing a revival of the [19th century] liberal ideology. This current advocates economic efficiency and defends the individual against the increasingly intrusive domination of organizations and the totalitarian tendencies of governments. Personal initiative must certainly be maintained and developed. But don't the Christians who commit themselves to this philosophy also tend to idealize it and make it a proclamation for liberty? They would like a new model that is better suited to current conditions. They are forgetting, however, that at its very roots philosophical liberalism is an erroneous affirmation of the autonomy of the individual in his activities, his motivations, the exercise of his freedom. In other words, the liberal ideology also demands careful discernment (*Ibid*, 35).

6. In this renewed approach to the various ideologies, Christians will draw on the sources of their faith and on the teachings of the church for the timely principles and norms to prevent themselves from being seduced and then locked

into a system whose limits and totalitarianism they are in danger of realizing too late if they do not perceive them at its roots. Over and above any system, without thereby forgetting the specific commitment to serve their brethren, Christians will affirm, on the basis of their choices, the specific Christian contribution to a positive transformation of society (Ibid, 36).

7. In specific situations, given the different kinds of solidarity that each person can experience, we must acknowledge a legitimate variety of possible options. The one Christian faith can lead to different commitments. The church invites all Christians to perform the dual task of encouraging and innovating so that structures will evolve and adapt to actual current needs. She calls on Christians who at first glance seem to be at odds on the basis of different options, to try and understand each other's position and the reasons therefor. An honest examination of their behavior and their rectitude will suggest to each side that they should be more deeply charitable and, while recognizing differences, believe equally in the possibilities of convergence and unity. "What unites the faithful is stronger than what divides them" (Ibid, 50).

31. Finally, Catholics should bear in mind that the Christian utopia, which is perfectly possible, not through human forces but through the promise of the Lord, is the Kingdom of God, an eschatological Kingdom that will achieve its perfect fulfillment at the end of time but that is even now moving forward in history through the evolution of less human to more human structures, which are the fruit of the struggle of committed men. In this regard, every system, every ideology and every form of government is destined to be outstripped and to give way to other better ones. Far from growing stagnant and absolutizing forms that are inherently transitory, Christians are destined to seek new horizons with determination and creativity, placing their hope in God alone.

Quotations Pertaining to No 31:

1. The appearance of this world, disfigured by sin, will pass away, but God teaches us that he is preparing for us a new dwelling place and a new earth (See 2 Corinthians, 5.2; 2 P. 3, 13), where justice will abide and whose blessedness will satisfy and surpass all of the longings for peace that spring up in the human heart...

2. Nevertheless, the expectation of a new earth must not weaken but rather stimulate our concern for perfecting this one, in which the body of a new human family grows, a body that can in some way foreshadow the new age. Therefore, although we must distinguish carefully between temporal progress and the growth of Christ's kingdom, to the extent that the former can help to better order human society, it is of great interest to the kingdom of God (Gaudium et Spes, 39).

3. To the church certainly, the fullness and perfection of the human vocation will be achieved with the definitive incorporation of each man into Easter or the triumph of Christ. However, the expectation of this consummation must, rather than lull us to sleep, "stimulate our concern for perfecting this

earth, in which the body of a new human family grows, a body that can in some way foreshadow the new age." We do not confuse temporal progress with the kingdom of Christ. However, the former, "to the extent that it helps to better order human society, is of great interest to the kingdom of God" (Medellin, Justice, II, 5).

Questions

- 1) Can the church identify with a given system or ideology? Why?
- 2) What fundamental values of mankind does the church recognize as existing in an authentic democracy and does she try to support and promote?
- 3) Can a democratic state engage in an ongoing dialogue (consultation, exchange of information, etc) with the different churches in its country for the good of citizens? What conditions must be present for such a dialogue to be possible?
- 4) Can there be good relations between the church and a totalitarian or authoritarian regime? Why?
- 5) How must the church exercise her authority so that she can apply the fundamental values of the individual that must also be practiced in a democracy?
- 6) Should Catholics belong to a single party, or can they have political differences of opinion? Why?
- 7) Can any system or ideology fully satisfy the Christian demands of peace, justice, freedom, etc? Why?

[12 Feb 87 pp 101-113]

[Text] V. Towards a Comprehensive Democracy

32. At present we regard as still valid the traditional institutions and structures of democracy that survive in various forms of government:

- Popular suffrage
- Representative government
- Separation of powers
- Party pluralism
- Legal guarantees for fundamental freedoms (of expression, of self-organization, of religion...)

Quotations Pertaining to No 32:

1. It is in perfect accord with human nature that juridical-political structures be established to afford all citizens, without any discrimination whatever and with increasing success, a real chance to participate freely and actively in laying the juridical foundation of a political community, in

governing the state, in determining the fields of action and limits of the various institutions and in choosing their leaders. Therefore, let all citizens be mindful of their right and, at the same time, their duty to vote freely to further the common good...

2. In order for responsible cooperation among citizens to achieve happy results in the course of public affairs, a positive system of law is required to appropriately divide the institutional functions of government and to effectively and independently safeguard rights (Gaudium et Spes, 75).

33. Nevertheless, experience tells us that a "pro forma" democracy that possesses these characteristics is not enough in practice, because they are often reduced to mere legal postulates that are not applied in the slightest.

Quotations Pertaining to No 33:

1. The lack of sociocultural integration in most of our countries has given rise to a superposition of cultures. In the economy, systems that provide only for sectors with large purchasing power have been implanted. In turn, the failure to adapt to the idiosyncrasies and possibilities of our population has often given rise to political instability and to the consolidation of preexisting pro forma institutions (Medellin, Justice, 1.2).

34. These democratic institutions are often manipulated and neutralized by:

--The predominance of economic power over the three branches of constitutional government: the Legislature, the Executive Branch and the Judiciary.

--The Executive Branch's absorption of the Legislature and the Judiciary.

--Inadequate information at all levels, thus preventing citizens from becoming appropriately involved.

--The cultural backwardness of broad sectors that precludes any involvement for them.

--An inordinate proliferation of pseudo-ideological parties and currents that bring confusion and atomization, thus weakening society's decision-making ability, etc.

35. As a result of these deviations, the modern democratic state has often become, paradoxically, antisocial, individualist and manipulated by privileged and excessively legalistic groups. In our homeland, it has also degenerated into a single-party statism that has made even suffrage a fiction.

Quotations Pertaining to No 35:

1. Profound and rapid changes make it particularly urgent that no one, by ignoring reality or our of sheer inertia, content himself with a merely individualistic morality. The duty of justice and charity can be fulfilled ever better if each person contributes to the common good according to his own abilities and the needs of others, promotes and assists public and private institutions that seek to better man's living conditions. There are those who profess grand and noble sentiments but who in fact always live as if they cared nothing for social needs. What is more, in several countries there are many who make light of social laws and norms, do not hesitate to resort to subterfuge and fraud to evade just taxes or other duties to society. Some belittle certain norms of social life, for example, hygiene standards or traffic regulations, unconcerned that their carelessness endangers their own life and that of others (*Gaudium et Spes*, 30).
 2. (Christians) should struggle with moral integrity and with prudence against injustice and oppression, against intolerance and the absolutism of a single man or a single political party (*Gaudium et Spes*, 75).
 3. Economic liberalism, which is materialistic in praxis, presents us with an individualistic view of man. According to it, the dignity of the human person consists of economic efficiency and individual freedom (*Puebla 1979*, 312).
36. Various groups rightly tend to question a purely electoral democracy that, after elections, does not guarantee a social and economic democracy in which all sectors and all citizens do not have access to the goods that are necessary for a human life that is worthy of the name. Thus, there can be no real democracy if all that matters is voting in elections while social justice is ignored.

Quotations Pertaining to No 36:

1. The conviction is growing that mankind can and must not only strengthen its control over creation but also establish a political, economic and social order that can better serve man and enable each individual and each group to affirm and develop their dignity.
2. Hence, very many persons are insistently voicing economic grievances, realizing that they are being deprived of goods through injustice or inequitable distribution...Workers and farmers seek not only to earn a living but also to develop their personal talents through their labor and to participate actively in regulating economic, social, political and cultural life (*Gaudium et Spes*, 9).
3. (At the same time) there is a growing awareness of the exalted dignity of the human person, of his superiority to things and of his universal and inviolable rights and duties. Therefore, man must have available all that he needs to lead a truly human life, such as food, clothing, shelter, the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family, the right to

education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to act in accord with the upright norm of one's own conscience, to protection of privacy and to rightful freedom in religious matters as well.

4. Development must remain under the control of man. It must not be left in the hands of a few or of all too economically powerful groups or of a single political community or of certain more powerful nations. On the contrary, at every level as many people as possible and, in the international sphere, all nations should take active part in directing development. It is also necessary for the spontaneous initiatives of individuals and their free associations to be coordinated effectively and consistently with the efforts of public authorities (*Gaudium et Spes*, 65).

5. The individualist ideology...fostered an unequal distribution of wealth at the outset of the industrial era, so much so that the workers found themselves without access to the essential goods that they had helped to produce and to which they were entitled. There thus arose powerful movements for liberation from the poverty that industrial society was causing (*Christian Freedom and Liberation*, 13).

37. But we must also be on guard against the dangerous illusion of those who scorn electoral democracy and emphasize solely economic democracy. Such radicalism is wont to give rise to paternalistic and even totalitarian regimes, which under the pretext of satisfying the material needs of all individuals in an egalitarian manner, sacrifice freedom and participation and even repress other fundamental individual rights.

Quotations Pertaining to No 37:

1. (In classical Marxism) the goal of human existence is the development of the material forces of production. The essence of the individual is not his conscience; it is, rather, his social existence. Bereft of the personal discretion that can indicate the path towards his fulfillment, the individual receives his standards of behavior solely from those who are responsible for changing social, political and economic structures. Therefore, he is unaware of human rights, especially freedom of religion, which is the basis of all other freedoms (Puebla 1979, No 313).

2. The rightful grievances of the labor movement have most often led to new enslavements, because they draw their inspiration from ideas that ignore that transcendent vocation of the human person and assign man a purely earthly purpose. At times such grievances have been directed towards collectivist designs that engender injustices as grave as those they seek to abolish (*Christian Freedom and Liberation*, 3).

38. As a fruit of freedom, democracy is thus not something acquired once and for all. Not only must it always be regarded as imperfect, but also as susceptible to regressions. Therefore, ongoing efforts must be made to achieve a more substantial democracy, for example:

- By strengthening institutions of direct democracy (such as the referendum);
- Through increasingly universal suffrage in elections not only to choose representatives but also to approve and monitor specific political programs;
- By attaching increasing importance to public opinion;
- Through recall elections, whereby the people, by means of their free and respected vote, can withdraw support from officials, parties and programs of which they no longer approve so that other approaches can be tried.

Quotations Pertaining to No 38:

1. The sole purpose of the exercise of public authority and its decisions is the common good. In Latin America, such exercise and such decisions often appear to support systems that run counter to the common good and favor privileged groups. The government must effectively and permanently assure, through legal means, the inalienable rights and liberties of the citizenry and the unfettered operation of intermediate structures...
2. The mission of government is to foster the creation of vehicles for the participation and the legitimate representation of the people and, if necessary, the creation of new such vehicles. We wish to stress the need to revitalize and strengthen municipal (and community) government as a starting point for (departmental), provincial, regional and national life (Medellin, III, 16).
3. In order for the nations of Latin America to fulfill the mission that history has assigned them as young nations rich in traditions and culture, they need a political order that is respectful of the dignity of man and that assures concord and peace within the community and in its relations with other communities. Before such an order can come about, the following principal yearnings and demands of our nations must be satisfied:

- Equality of all citizens, with the right and the duty to take part in forging the destiny of society, enjoying the same opportunities, shouldering equitably distributed burdens and obeying legitimately established laws;
- The exercise of their freedoms, protected by fundamental institutions that assure the common good, with respect for the rights of individuals and associations...
- The urgent reestablishment of justice, not just in theory and recognized pro forma, but effectively administered in practice by appropriate and functioning institutions (Puebla 1979, Nos 502, 503, 504, 506).

4. Is casting a ballot all there is to the participation of voters? No. The very action of voting requires a prior critical training of the mind to analyze situations, parties and programs. Once elections are over, voters must continue to participate, making sure that their votes are respected; preventing fraud; guiding elected officials through public consultations, and if warranted, identifying and removing, through legal mechanisms, officials who have betrayed the expectations of voters.

5. The vote is not a blank check that elected officials can use at their discretion (Conference of the Mexican Episcopate [CEM], Christian Commitment with Regard to Social Options and Politics, 105-108).

6. Hence, underlying the corruption besetting the country is a greater corruption, which is electoral fraud (Bishops of the Pastoral Region of the North, Christian Consistency in Politics, 3, 8) [For the text of "Christian Consistency in Politics," see JPRS LATIN AMERICA REPORT of 8 Jul 86 (JPRS-LAM-86-058), pp 83-92].

39. In order for real democracy to exist, it must be a comprehensive process that encompasses all social dimensions and brings about in the everyday life of men equality of rights and duties and a just sharing in all human goods. Therefore, true democracy will mean the equitable participation of all men in economic goods, in health care, in information, in culture, in politics and in all social spheres. True democracy is not limited to politics or to decision-making; rather, it must extend to a real sharing in benefits. The church knows that democracy is a process and, therefore, encourages and supports efforts to broaden and intensify it.

Quotations Pertaining to No 39:

1. Education that provides access to culture is also education in the responsible exercise of freedom. For this reason, there can be no genuine development unless the social and political system respects liberties and furthers them through the participation of all. Such participation can take several forms; it is necessary to guarantee a rightful pluralism in institutions and social initiatives. It assures, above all through a real separation of powers, the exercise of human rights by protecting them against possible abuses by government. No one can be excluded from participation in social and political life for reasons of sex, race, color, social status, language or religion. One of the greatest injustices of our time is that people in many nations are being excluded from culture society and politics.

2. When the political authorities regulate the exercise of freedoms, they must not use demands relating to law and order and security as pretexts for systematically restricting such freedoms. Neither the principle of so-called "national security," nor a restrictive economic philosophy, nor a totalitarian concept of social life must prevail over liberty and its rights (Christian Freedom and Liberation, 95).

40. Without detracting from the importance of other areas, the full participation of all in the economy merits special attention. As we said before, a democracy that is concerned solely about elections runs the risk of being nullified in practice if the majority of citizens are not involved in production processes and do not have access to the material goods that are needed for life.

Quotations Pertaining to No 40:

1. To meet the demands of justice and equity, every possible effort must be made, while respecting the rights of individuals and the characteristics of each people, to remove as quickly as possible the enormous economic inequalities, linked to individual and group discrimination, that exist today and that are often increasing. Also, in many regions, in light of the special difficulties facing farmers in producing and selling their products, they must be helped to increase their production and marketing capacity, to make the necessary changes and innovations, to obtain a fair return and not to be relegated to second-class citizenship, as often happens. Farmers, especially the young ones, should apply themselves diligently to honing their professional skills, without which agriculture cannot progress (*Gaudium et Spes*, 66).
2. Human labor that is expended in production, trade or services is far superior to the other elements of economic life, for the latter serve only as tools...(*Ibid*, 67).
3. It is the duty of society, in accordance with prevailing circumstances, to help its citizens find opportunities for adequate employment...(*Ibid*).
4. Payment for labor must be such as to enable a man and his family to lead a worthy material, social, cultural and spiritual life; such payment will depend on the job and productivity of each individual, the circumstances of the employer and the common good (*Ibid*).
5. Economic activity is generally performed through the combined labor of men; therefore, organizing and directing them in a manner that is detrimental to some workers is unjust and inhumane (*Ibid*).
6. God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of all men and peoples. Consequently, created goods must reach all men equitably under the aegis of justice and in the company of charity. Whatever the forms of ownership may be, as adapted to the legitimate institutions of peoples in accordance with legitimate and changing circumstances, this universal purpose of goods must never be questioned (*Ibid*, 69).
7. Ownership...contributes to the expression of the individual and offers him the opportunity to discharge his function responsibly in society and in the economy. Therefore, it is very important to foster access for all individuals and communities to some control over material goods...(*Ibid*, 71).

8. Private ownership or some sort of control over material goods provides everyone with an absolutely necessary sphere of personal and family autonomy and should be regarded as an extension of human freedom...(Ibid).

9. The right of private property is not incompatible with the various existing forms of public ownership...It is up to public authority, moreover, to prevent the abuse of private property that impairs the common good...(Ibid).

10. By its very nature, private property also has a social quality, the basis of which is the common purpose of goods. When this social quality is ignored, property often becomes a source of selfishness and grave disturbances, so much so that it gives its detractors a pretext to deny the right (of property) itself (Ibid).

11. (In our Latin American countries) economic systems have been established that provide only for the possibilities of sectors with great purchasing power (Medellin, Justice 1, 2).

12. In the light of the faith, we see the growing gap between rich and poor as scandalous and contradictory to Christianity; the luxury of a few becomes an insult to the poverty of the masses (Puebla 1979, No 28).

13. Thus, we see the inhuman poverty in which millions of Latin Americans live as the most devastating and humiliating scourge. Such poverty is reflected, for example, in infant mortality, the lack of suitable housing, health care problems, starvation wages, unemployment and underemployment, malnutrition, job insecurity, massive forced and unprotected migrations, etc (Ibid, No 29).

14. If we analyze this situation more in depth, we will discover that such poverty is no accident; rather, it is the product of economic, social and political situations and structures, though there are other causes of poverty as well...This reality demands personal conversion and sweeping changes in structures to meet the legitimate aspirations of the people for true social justice (Ibid, No 30).

41. Two systems are vying today for economic control: free-market capitalism and Marxist socialism. Neither of the two has succeeded in resolving the contradiction between labor and capital, which lies at the root of social conflicts in our time, especially because in practice they both exclude the workers from actual involvement in enterprise decision-making and in the equitable distribution of the fruits of their labor.

Quotations Pertaining to No 41:

1. Many people, especially in economically developed regions, seem to be ruled by economics, so much so that almost their entire personal and social life revolves around money; this is the case both in nations with a collectivized economy and in others (Gaudium et Spes, 63).

2. At a time when economic development could diminish social equalities if it were guided and organized rationally and humanely, it all too often intensifies them and at times even worsens the living conditions of the weakest and leads to contempt for the poor. While enormous masses lack the absolute necessities, some, even in the least developed countries, live sumptuously or squander money without heed. Affluence abounds alongside poverty. And while the few enjoy broad freedom of choice, many have no chance to act on their own initiative and responsibility, often subsisting in living and working conditions that are unworthy of human beings (*Ibid*, 63).

3. Development cannot be entrusted to the simple and almost mechanical course of individual economic activity, nor solely to the decisions of government. For this reason, we must brand as false both the doctrines that oppose the indispensable reforms in the name of false liberty and those that sacrifice the fundamental rights of the individual and of groups on the altar of the collective organization of production (*Ibid*, 65).

4. The Latin American business system and, through it, the present-day economy are based on an erroneous concept of the right to own the means of production and of the very purpose of the economy. An enterprise is a truly humane economy; it is not the same as the owners of capital, because it is fundamentally a community of individuals and a unit of labor that needs capital to produce goods. A person or a group of persons cannot be the property of an individual, a society or a state... (*Medellin, Justice*, III, 10).

5. The free-market capitalist system and the temptation of the Marxist system would seem to be exhausting their potential for transforming economic structures on our continent. Both systems curtail the freedom of the human person, because one presupposes the primacy of capital, its power and its discriminatory use to make a profit; the other, though it advocates an ideological humanism, pays heed instead to collective man and in practice becomes totalitarian (*Medellin, Justice*, III, 10).

6. The supreme commandment to love one's neighbor leads to a full recognition of the dignity of every person, who has been created in God's image. From this dignity stem several natural rights and duties. Freedom, the essential prerogative of the human person, manifests itself in all its profundity in light of the image of God. Individuals are the active and responsible subjects of social life (*Christian Freedom and Liberation*, 73).

7. The principle of solidarity and the principle of subsidiary status are closely tied to the dignity of man (*Ibid*).

8. By virtue of the former, man must contribute along with his fellow men to the common good of society at all levels. Thus, the church's social doctrine is opposed to all forms of social or political individualism (*Ibid*).

9. By virtue of the latter, neither the state nor society must ever replace the initiative and responsibility of individuals and intermediate social groups at the levels at which they can operate, nor destroy the space needed

for their freedom. Thus, the church's social doctrine is opposed to all forms of collectivism (Ibid).

10. Free-market capitalism leads to idolatry of individual wealth. We acknowledge that it has fostered the creativity of human freedom and has been a spur to progress. Nevertheless, "it considers profit the essential engine of economic progress, competition as the supreme law of economics and private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right that has no limits and carries no corresponding social obligations" (*Populorum Progressio*, 26). The illegitimate privileges that arise from the absolute right of ownership cause scandalous contrasts, dependence and oppression both domestically and internationally. Although in some countries its original historical manifestation has been mitigated by the influence of necessary social legislation and the required interventions of the state, elsewhere it still persists and is even regressing to its incipient forms of lessened social sensitivity (Puebla 1979, No 542).

11. Owing to its materialist tenets, Marxist collectivism also leads to idolatry of wealth, albeit in a collective form. Although it was born of a constructive criticism of the fetish of merchandise and the disregard of the human value of labor, it did not succeed in attacking the root of such idolatry, which consists of rejecting the God of love and justice, the only God worthy of worship (Ibid, No 543).

12. The engine of its dialectic is the class struggle. Its goal is a classless society, achieved through the dictatorship of the proletariat, which the dictatorship of the party ultimately establishes. All of its specific historical experiences as a system of government have been carried out under totalitarian regimes that are closed to any possibility of criticism and rectification. Some believe that various aspects of Marxism can be separated out, its doctrine and its analysis in particular. We recall that the Pontifical Magisterium says that "it would be illusory and dangerous to forget the close ties between them; to accept the elements of Marxian analysis without recognizing its link to ideology; to engage in the class struggle and in its Marxian interpretation while failing to perceive the sort of violent, totalitarian society to which this process leads" (Ibid, No 544).

13. The priority of labor over capital means that employers have a rightful duty to place the welfare of their workers before higher profits. They have a moral obligation not to retain unproductive capital and, in investing, to bear in mind the common good above all. Their priority, therefore, should be to create new jobs for the production of truly useful goods (*Christian Freedom and Liberation*, 87).

14. The right to private property is inconceivable without duties that seek the common good. It is subordinate to the higher principle of the universal purpose of goods (Ibid, 87).

15. Christians who want to live their faith through political action as a service cannot embrace, without contradiction, ideologies that are radically or in their substance opposed to their faith and to their concept of man. They can embrace neither the Marxist ideology, its atheist materialism, its

dialectic of violence and the manner in which it views individual freedom within society, denying any transcendence to man and to his personal and collective destiny; nor liberal ideology, which believes that it exalts individual freedom by removing any restrictions from it, encouraging the quest for self-interest and power and regarding social solidarity as a more or less automatic consequence of individual initiatives, not as a higher goal and criterion of social organization (*Octogesima Adveniens*, 26).

16. But it is unfortunate that on these new conditions in society a system has been constructed that considers profit the essential engine of economic progress, competition as the supreme law of economics and private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right that has no limits and carries no corresponding social obligation. Such unchecked liberalism leads to dictatorship, which Pius XI rightly denounced as producing "the international imperialism of money." One cannot condemn such abuses too strongly by solemnly recalling once again that the economy is at the service of man. But if it is true that one type of capitalism has been the source of excessive suffering, injustices and fratricidal conflicts whose effects still persist, it would also be wrong to attribute to industrialization itself evils that belong to the disastrous system that accompanied it. On the contrary, one must recognize in all justice the irreplaceable contribution made by the organization of labor and of industry to what development has accomplished (*Populorum Progressio*, 26).

42. The church is convinced that economic and social activity must move forward towards the consolidation of the shared enterprise, in the different forms that human creativity has discovered or may discover: joint management, cooperativism, etc.

Quotations Pertaining to No 42:

1. In economic enterprises it is individuals who work together, that is, free and independent human beings created in God's image. Therefore, with the function of each person (owner, manager, technician or worker) taken into account and with the necessary unity of management preserved, the active involvement of all in running the enterprise in wisely chosen ways should be promoted. However, since many economic and social decisions on which the future of the workers and their children depends are made at higher institutional levels, not in the enterprise itself, the workers should also take part in making such decisions themselves or through freely elected representatives (*Gaudium et Spes*, 68).

2. We...urgently appeal to employers, to their organizations and to the political authorities to radically modify their attitudes and actions concerning the purpose, organization and operations of enterprises (*Medellin, Justice*, III, 10).

3. All those employers who individually or through their organizations are making an effort to run their businesses according to the guidelines of the church's Social Magisterium deserve encouragement. On such efforts will

depend whether economic and social change in Latin America leads to a truly humane economy...(Ibid).

4. ...We must assert that neither capital nor the latest production technologies nor economic plans will truly serve man unless the workers, with the "necessary unity of enterprise management preserved," are incorporated with the full force of their being through the "active involvement of all in running the enterprise in wisely chosen ways" (Ibid, 11).

5. The numerous proposals put forth by experts on the Catholic social doctrine and also by the Supreme Magisterium of the church take on particular importance in this light (Laborem Exercens, 14).

6. These proposals refer to the co-ownership of the tools of labor, to the involvement of workers in the management and/or profits of the enterprise, to so-called employee shareholding and other similar arrangements (Ibid).

43. Another element that characterizes a sound democratic society is the legitimate autonomy that intermediate groups or organizations ought to enjoy vis-a-vis a nation's government, for example: labor unions, associations of professionals, parents, teachers...companies (except those that have strategic national importance), universities, etc.

Quotations Pertaining to No 43:

1. Among the fundamental rights of the human person must be counted the right of the workers to freely found associations that genuinely represent them and that can help to properly arrange economic life, as well as the right to take part freely in the activities of such associations without running the risk of reprisals. Through this sort of orderly participation, together with continued training in economic and social matters, all will develop a growing sense of their own responsibility, which will cause them to feel that they are cooperating, in accordance with their own means and aptitudes, in the overall task of economic and social development and in the attainment of the universal common good (Gaudium et Spes, 68).

2. Authorities must beware of hindering family, social or cultural associations, as well as intermediate bodies or institutions, and of preventing them from engaging in their lawful and constructive activities, which they should rather promote in a free and orderly fashion (Ibid, 75).

3. We feel that national communities should have a comprehensive organization. In them, the population, especially the working classes, must enjoy through territorial and functional structures a receptive, active, creative and decisive participation in the building of a new society. The intermediate structures between individuals and the state must be organized freely, without undue interference by the government or by dominant groups, given their development and their concrete participation in the attainment of the overall welfare. They are the vital fabric of society. They are also the real

expression of the freedom and the solidarity of the citizenry (Medellin, Justice, III, 7).

4. The organized peasant and labor movement, to which the workers are entitled, must acquire sufficient strength and presence in the intermediate professional structures. Their associations will have the strength, solidarity and responsibility to exercise the right of representation and participation in national production and marketing...They must thus exercise their right to be represented as well at the political, social and economic levels at which decisions relating to the common good are made...(Ibid, 12).

5. A practical and efficient avenue for participating in political decisions with a critical mind will be provided by the intermediate organizations of citizens within society at large. Situated between grassroots organizations and the government, they can more effectively represent the values of the community and convey the interests, aspirations and collaborations of a segment of society to government and to society at large (Mexican Episcopal Conference, Christian Commitment With Regard to Social Options and Politics, 107, Collective Documents of the Mexican Episcopate I, 958).

6. "The formation, activities and purpose of the intermediate groups can safeguard and develop or harm and oppress the human person." "Wherever this social institution does not exist or is hindered by higher or monopolizing powers, there is no chance to create a properly ordered society, nor to develop a truly aware, responsible and united people" (Ibid, 108, 959).

44. This autonomy does not relieve the state of its responsibility to intervene legally in all activities carried on in the nation. However, such intervention must under all circumstances abide by the principle of subsidiary status.

Quotations Pertaining to No 44:

1. This [the state], which is the natural and necessary bond to assure the cohesiveness of the social fabric, must have the attainment of the common good as its goal. It operates with respect for the legitimate freedoms of individuals, families and subsidiary groups to create effectively and for the benefit of all the conditions required to achieve man's authentic and complete welfare, including his spiritual welfare. It operates within the bounds of its jurisdiction, which can vary in accordance with the country and the people. It always intervenes through a desire for justice and devotion to the common good, for which it is ultimately responsible. Hence, it does not usurp from individuals and intermediate bodies their spheres of activities and their own responsibilities, thus inducing them to work together for the attainment of the common good. Indeed, "the purpose of all intervention in society is to help its members, not to destroy or absorb them" (Octogesima Adveniens, 46).

45. A totalitarian regime characteristically endeavors to control all activities of citizens, even their thoughts and beliefs. The corporativist system also seeks such control.

46. In a democracy, intermediate associations plan a natural mediating role in relations between government and individuals, affording the latter an opportunity to organize themselves and, hence, take part in a more orderly and effective fashion in the channels of consultation and input that are characteristic of a democratic regime and that also represent a school in which the citizenry can learn the practice of democracy.

47. Political power, as represented by the government or authority that the people elect, is an indispensable element of every state. Political power must serve the common good in all its dimensions: social, economic, cultural, religious, etc, without discriminating against groups, social classes or creeds. However, political power always runs the risk of becoming absolute, of becoming divorced from the sovereign will of the people to further only the interests of an individual, a group or a party. In this instance, political power, represented by a government or system, becomes the main enemy of democracy and the main obstacle to achieving and restoring it.

Quotations Pertaining to No 47:

1. A sound political system needs an authority that serves, which means governing for all and for the good of all, educating and spurring citizens to participate conscientiously and responsibly in decision-making, to promote the common good through just laws and their diligent enforcement, and to courageously undertake the changes that further the good of society. Authority represents a commitment to serve the needy in particular (CEM, Christian Commitment With Regard to Social Options and Politics, 104) (Collective Documents of the Mexican Episcopate I, No 955).

2. The individuals, families and various groups that make up the civic community are aware of their own inadequacy to establish a fully human life and sense the need for a broader community in which all would daily contribute their energies toward the better attainment of the common good. Therefore, they form a political community in accordance with several institutional models. Hence, the political community is born to seek the common good, in which it finds its full justification and meaning and from which stem its original and proper legitimacy. The common good embraces the sum of those conditions of social life by which individuals, families and associations can more fully and readily achieve their own fulfillment (Gaudium et Spes, 74).

3. But there are many different people to be found in a political community, and they can rightly lean towards different solutions. Lest the political community perish owing to the plurality of views, authority is indispensable to guide the actions of all towards the common good, not mechanically or despotically, but mainly as a moral force that is based on freedom and on the sense of responsibility of each person (Ibid).

4. It is obvious, therefore, that the political community and public authority are based on human nature and, hence, belong to an order foreordained by God, even if the choice of government and the selection of leaders is left up to the free will of the citizenry (Ibid).

5. It also follows that political authority, whether in the community as such or in the representative institutions, must always be exercised within the bounds of morality to seek the dynamically conceived common good, according to a legitimately or soon to be established legal system. It is then that citizens are obliged in conscience to obey. From all of this we can deduce the responsibility, dignity and importance of those who govern (Ibid).

6. But when the public authority oversteps its jurisdiction and oppresses the people, they should not shrink from the objective demands of the common good; they can, however, lawfully defend their rights and those of their fellow citizens against the abuse of such authority, observing the limits imposed by the natural law and the Gospel (Ibid).

7. The specific ways in which the political community organizes its fundamental structure and balances the branches of government can vary according to the genius of each people and its history. But they must always serve to develop men who are cultured, peace-loving and benevolently respectful of the whole human family (Ibid).

8. Authority, which is necessary in every society, comes from God and consists of the power to command in accordance with righteous reason. Consequently, its power to compel arises from morality and must be exercised in accordance with morality so that it compels in all conscience. "Authority is above all a moral force" (Puebla 1979, No 499).

9. Sin corrupts the use that men make of power, causing them to abuse the rights of others, at times more or less absolutely. This occurs most strikingly in the exercise of political power, because it is in politics in which decisions are made that determine the overall organization of the community's temporal welfare and because politics lend itself more readily not only to abuses by those who wield power but also to the absolutizing of power itself by virtue of the police. Political power is deified when it is regarded as absolute. Therefore, the totalitarian use of power is a form of idolatry, and as such the church rejects it completely (Gaudium et Spes, 75). It pains us to acknowledge the presence of many authoritarian and even oppressive regimes on our continent. They are one of the most serious obstacles to the full development of the rights of the individual, of groups and of nations themselves (Puebla 1979, No 500).

10. This is compounded by the anxieties that arise from the abuses of power that are typical of authoritarian regimes. Anxieties over systematic or selective repression, accompanied by delation, violations of privacy, inordinate compulsion, torture, exile. Anxieties in so many families over the disappearance of their loved ones, of whom they hear no news. Total insecurity because of arrests without court orders. Anxieties over a subordinated or inhibited administration of justice. As the pontiffs have indicated, the church, "owing to a genuine evangelical commitment," must make

her voice heard and condemn these situations, especially when the government officials or leaders claim to be Christian (Puebla 1979, No 42).

48. Another important element that must be taken into account in the practice of an authentic democracy is the relationship between natural law and positive laws. We know that the concept of natural law enjoys little acceptance today; however, modern man is very sensitive to fundamental human rights. Several compilations of these rights have been made, outstanding among them the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (San Francisco, UN, 1948). Now then, we can readily see that human rights are merely an expression of natural law, to which all positive law must be subordinate.

Quotations Pertaining to No 48:

1. In the depths of his conscience man discovers a law that he does not impose on himself but that he must obey and whose voice resounds, when necessary, in his heart, telling him to love and do good and avoid evil: do this and shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God. Human dignity consists of obeying this law, by which man will be individually judged (Gaudium et Spes, 16).

2. A moral demand has been voiced in the formulation of human rights. Some of them have as their aim what has come to be called "liberties," that is to say, the ways of recognizing that each human being is responsible for himself and his transcendent destiny, as well as the inviolability of his conscience (Christian Freedom and Liberation, 32).

3. When laws and institutions conform to the natural law and are geared to the common good, they guarantee and foster individual freedom. All of the coercive aspects of the law, nor the stability of a rule of law worthy of the name are to be condemned. The structure can be said to be marked by sin, but the structure as such cannot be condemned (Ibid, 74).

49. It is understandable that totalitarian or authoritarian regimes carry to its ultimate expression the notion of positive law, which regards the state and, specifically, the organs of government, as the source and supreme standard of laws. They thus seek to cloak in "legality" actions that run counter to the most elementary justice, by means of laws that are in keeping only with their desire for domination.

Questions

1) Why is a purely "pro forma" democracy often not enough for all of the people to become involved in all of the decisions and share in all the goods that they ought to?

2) What difference is there between "electoral democracy" and "economic democracy"?

- 3) What can we do to make the family, schools, companies, labor unions, clubs or the very church communities to which we belong places of learning in which we practice the habit of democracy?
- 4) Analyze the situation in Mexico in these areas: elections, the economy and the legal system. What have we achieved? Where have we fallen short?
- 5) According to the church's social doctrine, how effective are free-market capitalism and Marxist socialism in resolving our homeland's social and economic problems? What importance do these two ideologies attach to real and effective input from the people in the decisions that touch them?
- 6) How do you think companies should be organized so that they offer greater democracy and social justice?
- 7) What are intermediate organizations? Do you know of any? What sort of relationship should there be between a democratic government and the intermediate organizations? What is the relationship like in Mexico?
- 8) What is your idea of "natural law"? What examples could you give of "natural law"?
- 9) What is the difference between "natural law" and "positive law"? What relationship should there be between them?
- 10) Do you think that a civilian authority can enact laws without bearing in mind the fundamental rights of citizens?

VI. Education for Democracy

50. Even though justice and liberty are aspirations inherent to man, the specific circumstances in which human beings live, their culture and their upbringing could cause them to not always opt for a system of government that fosters their comprehensive development as individuals. We must not forget that even the most unjust, repressive and corrupt systems that have plagued and still plague the 20th century have been sustained not only by the determination of those wielding power but also by the enthusiastic and fanatic backing of a great many citizens who have justified these aberrations as being in the nation's best interest.

51. Democracy can be the fruit only of a certain moral climate, of an attitude among individuals that prompts them to esteem, to strive for and to regard as an ongoing mission the exercise of freedom and justice.

Quotations Pertaining to No 51:

In order for each individual to more carefully cultivate his sense of responsibility both towards himself and towards the various social groups to which he belongs, a broader spiritual culture must be sought with the utmost diligence through the extraordinary resources that mankind has available today. In particular, the education of youth from every social background

must be guided to produce men and women who are not only cultured but also have generous hearts, in keeping with the urgent demands of our era (Gaudium et Spes, 31).

2. The best way to achieve truly human politics is to foster an inner sense of justice, benevolence and service to the common good, and to bolster the fundamental convictions regarding the true nature of the political community and, finally, the proper exercise and limits of government (Ibid, 73).

3. Another demand of political action is to develop critical thinking among citizens and to orient their activities towards more effective involvement in the pursuit of the common good. Such critical thinking will prevent the political activities of citizens from being reduced, as has sometimes happened, to serving the interests of individuals or groups whom they do not even know (CEM, Christian Commitment With Regard to Social Options and Politics, 105).

4. Critical thinking means being able to analyze situations, possessing the personal criteria with which to calmly judge such situations, being able to decide on the basis of one's own convictions and then acting accordingly. Political action cannot be improvised or replaced by deciding for others what is best for them. Therefore, political action that brings awareness is praiseworthy and should be encouraged by all. It bears noting, however, that in undertaking this noble work, people often yield, out of impatience, to the temptation of imposing their own ideology, their own judgments and their own decisions and, above all, run the risk of becoming new demagogues who drag others with them and scuttle the beneficial accomplishment of bringing the awareness that they embody (Ibid, 106).

52. From the above we can gather how important specific education for democracy is. It must be an ongoing task among individuals and groups and must be undertaken in every sphere in which man lives and pursues his activities: the family, the school, intermediate organizations and associations and the exercise of civic activity itself. The church must also make her contribution in this field.

Quotations Pertaining to No 52:

1. It is necessary, (therefore), to encourage in everyone the desire to take part in common efforts. Praise is due those nations in which most citizens participate in public life with true freedom (Gaudium et Spes, 31).

2. Great attention must be paid to civic and political education, which is particularly necessary today for the people, especially young people, so that all citizens can fulfill their mission in the life of the political community (Ibid, 75).

3. The lack of political awareness in our countries makes the church's educational activities indispensable, so that Christians will regard their involvement in the nation's political life as a duty of conscience and as the

practice of charity in its noblest and most effective sense for the life of the community (Medellin, Justice, III, 6).

4. We wish to assert that the development of a social conscience and realistic involvement in the issues of the community and of social structures are indispensable. We must awaken a social conscience and community habits in all professional circles and groups, whether regarding a dialogue and community experience within the group itself or in relations with broader social groups (workers, peasants, professionals, the clergy, members of religious orders, government officials) (*Ibid*, 17).

5. An unprecedented challenge today faces Christians who are engaged in building this civilization of love, which embodies all of the Gospel's ethical and cultural heritage. This task requires new thinking on the relationship between the supreme commandment to love and the social order in all its complexity.

6. The primary goal of this in-depth thinking is the formulation and implementation of bold programs of action aimed at the social and economic liberation of millions of men and women who are suffering intolerable economic, social and political oppression.

7. Such action must begin with a major effort at education: education for the civilization of work, education for solidarity, access to culture for all (*Christian Freedom and Liberation*, 81).

8. This bespeaks the importance of education for life in society, an education that in addition to mentioning the rights of individuals, reminds them of the necessary corollary of those rights: the duties of each individual to others. The sense and fulfillment of duty are themselves conditioned by self-mastery, the acceptance of responsibilities and of the limits placed on the exercise of individual or group freedom (*Octogesima Adveniens*, 24).

9. The originality of the Christian message is not simply that it underscores the need for a change in structures, but that it stresses the conversion of man, who then demands the change. We will not have a new continent without new and revamped structures; above all, there will be no new continent without new men who in light of the Gospel know how to be truly free and responsible (Medellin, Justice, II, 3).

10. These criteria also enable us to judge the worth of structures, which are the sum total of institutions and accomplishments, the practices that man finds already in place or that he creates, domestically and internationally, and that guide or organize economic, social and political life. Though they are necessary, they often tend to become rigid and petrified mechanisms that are relatively independent of human will, thus paralyzing or harming social development and engendering injustice. Nevertheless, they are always the responsibility of man, who can change them; they are not dictated by so-called historical determinism (*Christian Freedom and Liberation*, 74).

11. The church is certainly aware of the complex problems facing societies and of the difficulty of finding appropriate answers. Nevertheless, she feels

that above all we must appeal to the spiritual and moral capacities of the individual and continually demand an inner conversion, if we want to secure economic and social changes that truly serve man (*Ibid*, 75).

12. The primacy accorded structures and technical organization over the individual and over the demand for his dignity is the expression of a materialist view of man that runs counter to the building of a just social order (*Ibid*).

13. Men are aspiring today to free themselves from need and dependence. But such liberation begins with the inner freedom that they must regain vis-a-vis their goods and their governments. They will achieve it only through a transcendent love of man and, consequently, a real willingness to serve. Otherwise, clearly, even the most revolutionary ideologies will simply bring about a change of masters. Once they are installed in power, the new masters will surround themselves with privileges, restrict liberties and allow other forms of injustice to be established (*Octogesima Adveniens*, 45).

53. Without denying the harmful or liberating influence that structures exert on the behavior of the individual and the need to transform them when necessary, the church contends, with the Lord, that it is from man's heart that the vices and sins that degrade the human condition arise. Therefore, regarding democracy, the church stresses that what is necessary is a personal conversion of individuals, who from the bottom of their hearts must reject lies, selfishness and violence and embrace good, truth, justice and sincere brotherhood.

54. Throughout their history all peoples face, not once but many times, the need to change their political and social systems when the existing ones have become so flawed or hardened that they are not only unworkable but intolerable. This happens especially when the violation of human rights and the lack of respect for fundamental liberties have exhausted the people's patience. This is the position that the Mexican people are taking with ever increasing strength.

Quotations Pertaining to No 54:

1. When the political authority oversteps its jurisdiction and oppresses the people, they should not shrink from the objective demands of the common good; they can, however, lawfully defend their rights and those of their fellow citizens against the abuse of such authority, observing the limits imposed by natural law and the Gospel (*Gaudium et Spes*, 74).

2. Nevertheless, the acknowledged priority of liberty and of the conversion of the heart in no way eliminates the need for a change in unjust structures. Therefore, it is completely legitimate for those who are being oppressed by the possessors of wealth or political power to act through morally licit means to secure structures and institutions in which their rights are truly respected (*Christian Freedom and Liberation*, 75).

3. In any event, it is true that the structures established for the good of individuals are incapable by themselves of achieving it and guaranteeing it. Proof of this is the corruption that exists among leaders and state bureaucracies in certain countries and that destroys all honest social life. Consequently, an effort must be made both to convert hearts and to improve structures, for sin, which is at the root of unjust situations, is basically and essentially a voluntary act arising from the freedom of the individual. Only in a derivative and secondary sense can it be applied to structures and can we speak of "social sin" (Ibid).

4. Furthermore, in the liberation process a nation's history cannot be ignored, nor can a people's cultural identity be attacked. Consequently, one cannot passively accept, much less actively support, groups that by force or by manipulating public opinion, take over the machinery of state and abusively impose on society an imported ideology that runs counter to the people's true cultural values. In this regard, we should remember the grave moral and political responsibility of intellectuals (Ibid).

55. Under such circumstances, when all peaceful and legal means of bringing about a change in structures seem to have been exhausted, the people generally turn their thoughts to armed struggle. Although all peoples have taken this approach throughout history, our people included, the church, which is gaining an ever deeper understanding of the Gospel, tends to regard the recourse of violence as barbarous and typical of more primitive states of mankind that ought to be behind us today.

Quotations Pertaining to No 55:

1. Warned of the calamities that the human race has made possible (with war), we should use the time of peace that we enjoy with God's help to find, through a greater awareness of our own responsibility, means of resolving our differences in a manner more worthy of man. Providence demands that we free ourselves from the age-old slavery of war (Gaudium et Spes, 81).

2. We must seek with all of our strength to prepare for an era in which...war of any sort is altogether banned (Ibid, 82).

3. Although it is true that a revolutionary insurrection can be legitimate in the case of "an obvious, prolonged tyranny that gravely violates the fundamental rights of the individual and dangerously harms the general welfare of the country," whether the tyranny is of one person or of obviously unjust structures, it is also true that violence or "armed revolution" in general "engenders new injustices, introduces new imbalances and causes new ruin. An existing evil cannot be combated at the cost of a greater evil" (Medellin, Peace, II, 19).

4. Systematic recourse to violence portrayed as necessary for liberation must be condemned as a destructive illusion that paves the way for new enslavements. Violence practiced by landowners against the poor, arbitrary police action and any form of violence that has become a system of government

must be condemned with equal vigor. In this regard, we must learn from the tragic experiences to which our century has been and still is witness. We cannot accept governments that are passively culpable in democracies in which the social conditions of many men and women are far from commensurate with what constitutionally guaranteed individual and social rights demand (Christian Freedom and Liberation, 76).

56. The human cost of war is indeed inordinate, and since war does not provide for a change of heart among combatants on either side, the resulting situation very often gives rise to injustices similar to the ones that were to be abolished, as merely the leading figures have changed.

Quotations Pertaining to No 56:

1. So then, if we consider the overall circumstances in our countries, if we bear in mind the Christian's preference for peace, the enormous problems of civil war, its logic of violence, the atrocious evils that it engenders, the danger of prompting outside intervention no matter how unjustified, and the difficulty of building a regime of justice and freedom on the foundation of a regime of violence, we fervently hope that the people, their consciousness raised, will place their dynamism in service to justice and peace (Medellin, Peace, II, 19).

2. Certain situations of grave injustice demand the courage of sweeping reforms and the abolition of unjustifiable privileges. But those who discredit the path of reforms to further the myth of revolution are not only fueling the illusion that the abolition of an iniquitous situation will by itself suffice to create a more human society; they are also facilitating the coming to power of totalitarian regimes. The struggle against injustice makes sense only if it seeks to establish a new social and political order that meets the demands of justice. Justice must already characterize the stages of its establishment. There is a morality of means (Christian Freedom and Liberation, 78).

3. Motivated by the same Spirit, we cannot fail to praise those who renounce violence in demanding their rights and who resort to the means of defense that, moreover, are available even to the weakest, provided that this is possible without impairing the rights and duties of others or of society (Gaudium et Spes, 78).

4. Christians are peace-loving and not ashamed of it; they are not simply pacifists, because they are capable of fighting. But they prefer peace to war. They realize that "sudden or violent changes of structures would be deceptive, ineffective by themselves and certainly not in keeping with the dignity of the people, which demands that the necessary changes be made from within, that is to say, through a suitable consciousness-raising, appropriate training and the effective involvement of all, which ignorance and at times subhuman living conditions are today impeding" (Medellin, Peace, II, 15).

5. Our responsibility as Christians is to promote in every way nonviolent means of reestablishing justice in social, political and economic relations...(Puebla 1979, No 533).

6. Owing to the continued development of the technologies utilized and the ever graver dangers entailed in the recourse to violence, what is today called "passive resistance" offers an approach that is more in keeping with moral principles and no less promising of success (Christian Freedom and Liberation, 79).

7. Fundamental principles and criteria for judgment inspire guidelines for action. Since the common good of human society is in service to individuals, the means of action must be in keeping with the dignity of man and facilitate the education of freedom. There is a definite criterion for judgment and action: there can be no genuine liberation when the rights of freedom are not respected from the beginning (Ibid, 74).

8. When the church encourages the establishment and activities of associations, such as labor unions, that struggle to defend the legitimate rights and interests of the workers and for social justice, she is not at all accepting the theory that the class struggle is the structural engine of society. The approach she is advocating is not the struggle of one class against another to eliminate the adversary; her approach does not stem from an aberrant and submissive obedience to a so-called law of history. What she advocates is a noble and reasoned struggle for justice and social solidarity. A Christian will always prefer the path of dialogue and agreement (Ibid, 72).

9. These principles must be applied in particular in the extreme case of the armed struggle, which the Magisterium identifies as the last recourse to put an end to "an obvious and prolonged tyranny that gravely violates the fundamental rights of the individual and dangerously harms the general welfare of a country." Nevertheless, recourse to this means can be considered only after a very careful analysis of the situation. Indeed, owing to the continued development of the technologies utilized and the ever graver dangers entailed in the recourse to violence, what is today called "passive resistance" offers an approach that is more in keeping with moral principles and no less promising of success (Ibid, 79).

10. Recourse to criminal methods, whether by the established government or by insurgent groups, such as reprisals against towns, torture, terrorism and calculated provocation that causes the death of many people during mass demonstrations, are never acceptable. The hateful campaigns of slander that can destroy an individual psychologically and morally are likewise inadmissible (Ibid, 79).

57. Therefore, the church calls with increasing conviction for "active nonviolence" or "peaceful resistance" as a means of changing unjust structures. The church feels that this approach, pursued tenaciously to its ultimate consequences, is not only as effective as an armed struggle could be, but will achieve its objectives at a lower cost to the people. Besides, it is fully consistent with the Gospel.

58. Nevertheless, we must bear in mind that "nonviolence" is part of the purest and most demanding education for democracy. It demands a complete change of outlook and of attitude towards life and man, and the Gospel of Christ offers the finest motivations for this education.

Quotations Pertaining to No 58:

1. Christ has given us the commandment to love our enemies. Liberation in the spirit of the Gospel is, therefore, incompatible with hatred of another, whether as an individual or a group, including the enemy (Christian Freedom and Liberation, 77).

2. Solidarity is a direct demand of human and supernatural brotherhood. Today's serious socioeconomic problems cannot be resolved unless new fronts of solidarity are created: solidarity of the poor among themselves, solidarity with the poor, to which the rich are summoned, and solidarity among the workers. Social institutions and organizations at various levels, as well as the state, must take part in a general movement of solidarity. When the church makes this appeal, she is aware that it concerns her in a very special way (Ibid, 89).

Questions

- 1) What moral qualities must a person have in order to seek the values that are the foundation of a democratic system?
- 2) What relationship is there between a change of heart (conversion) and a change of structures? Can one take place without the other? Why?
- 3) Do you think that violence is a proper and, at times, necessary, means of bringing about a change of structures? Why?
- 4) What do understand by "active nonviolence" or "peaceful resistance"?
- 5) What characteristics must "active nonviolence" have to bring about a change of structures?
- 6) What moral virtues or values must a person have to undertake a nonviolent struggle for freedom and justice?

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